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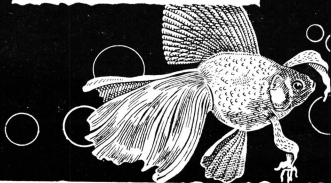
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# LEGACY FROM MARS

BY RAYMOND Z. GALLUN

ILLUSTRATED BY EBERLE

*Marty and Martia, quite naturally, came from Mars. But even after all the fuss and bother they made, it was hard to see why a couple of such creatures should want to join the exhibits in the Museum of Natural History.*





I remember how it was. We found Marty and Martia wriggling in a puddle at the rim of the north polar icecap of Mars.

Marty didn't resist capture very much. In fact he sort of flipfopped toward us, as if he was curious, or sociable and lonesome. Martia had less romantic adventure in her nature, and more sense. She put up an awful fight for a creature so small, flopping and scrambling out of that puddle of ice-water, and showing real strategy in trying to evade our gloved fingers and to slip into a safe chink in the accumulation of melting hoarfrost. Except for not wanting to desert Marty, she would have gotten clean away.

But at last we had them both safe in a big pan, with water in it, and a lot of the green algae that thrives in those parts in summertime, and is considered an elegant addition to fine soups on Earth. To make the prison complete, we covered the pan with an algae strainer of wire mesh.

Mostly, we were jubilant. By "we" I mean Terry Miklas, half Greek and half Irish, twenty years old, then, and musically ambitious; and myself, John Durbin, dubbed Popeye by Terry—which was all right with me, since the original comic character is supposed to have been a

good sort with a deep voice. I was the supposed mate of our ship, the *Searcher*. Mr. Brunder, our captain, still wasn't present. He had become a bad headache to us both.

However, for the moment, Terry and I just peered at our captives. Whatever his other limitations, the kid was quick with names. "Poor little things, Popeye," he crooned, "Marty and Martia, the Martian goldfish . . ."

Muffled by his plastic oxygen helmet and the thin atmosphere of Mars, Terry's voice sounded even more soft and sentimental.

The creatures were green with some glints left in it—like fake gold that is giving its phoniness away. Marty was about as long as your hand; Martia, whose sex we guessed by her more retiring nature—a possible error—was a trifle shorter. The green, we know now, was from their being partly vegetable. Nowadays much of the fauna of Mars has to be like that, because of the scarcity of free oxygen in the air, and even, sometimes, dissolved in what water there is. A green plant can draw energy right from the sun, and free its own oxygen.

You could see Marty's and Martia's vital organs right through their tough but semi-

transparent hides. Later we learned that much of what we saw was brain-tissue. Two pairs of eyes bulged like black beads. Martia's little flippers, tipped with claws almost like fingers, tapped appealingly at the side of the pan, while she looked upward at us, and seemed to plead. But Marty just hovered near her, his mouth opening and shutting as his gills worked. Like his mate, he was a dainty, rather beautiful little creature. But now he looked stupid—which, I decided, must be the case—trusting us enough to let us catch him and Martia! Yeah—who was I to know he was only playing dumb?

"Poor little things!" Terry crooned again. "Dammit all, Popeye—let's let 'em go . . ."

Yes, that was the way Terry Miklas was—soft-headed, impractical, ready to give up the opportunity of a lifetime because his heart is hurt a little.

"Are you nuts?" I growled. "There are guys who claim to have seen these critters scrambling around the Martian ice-caps. But nobody ever caught even one, before—though big rewards have been offered. You know how bone-dry most of this crazy planet is! Fishlike critters left alive on it? Only fossils are known . . . Figure if you can what some big, well-financed

scientific organization would give . . ."

Terry kicked my boot. I turned. Approaching from toward our ship, and glowering behind his whiskers, was our Captain Brunder. Ordinarily he didn't scare me, even with the awful grouch he'd developed this trip. But now, in a delicate matter which, after all, did have roots of sentiment, he seemed to belong about as well as a howling Martian dust storm over a bed of tender violets.

I had a helpless impulse to try to hide the pan that Marty and Martia were in. But in that level, featureless country, where only our simple machinery for gathering and processing the algae, stood beside a few wind-worn monoliths and low, dry growths and the vast flatness of the icecap, shallow, and gilded by the small, low sun, except where the few long blue shadows were cast, there just wasn't any effective place of concealment.

The kid was edging in front of that pan, and backward toward it. He was trying to hide it from Brunder's view, of course; but a backward kick of his boot would also overturn it and set our captives free, if he could get a step closer. With all this, I even somehow sort of sympathized, now. But Terry's

grin of innocence was obviously counterfeit. His ineptness in practical matters included an inability to bluff.

Now Brunder let go at him with his big mouth. "Stop in your tracks, you mouth-organ-tooting, know-nothing gold-brick!" he yelled. "If you weren't too dense, I'd say you were trying a stunt! Yes, you, Miklas! Who else? For what do I pay you, I wonder? For gabbing and tooting? Get to work, I say! Or by God, I'll leave you marooned on this stinkin' planet! . . ."

Yes, Brunder was mostly just in his usual fine form of this trip—which had been yak, yak, yak at the kid every chance he got. I was not only his mate and half his crew—Terry being the other half, if you discount Brunder's cat, Toby—I was his lesser partner; which means, I suppose, that I once thought he had good points—not that even later I didn't want to judge him generously. You see, he'd been chasing money-colored rainbows most of his life, and not ever finding much of the stuff naturally made him sour. Now, totting edible algae to Earth in the battered old *Searcher*—get the hopeful name?—was a last-ditch deal. I had been bitter, myself.

Just the same, Brunder got my goat, now. Terry had

worked about as well as any green spacehand can. So why ride him? I was as big and ugly as our captain. Now I turned impudent. "Aw—dry up, Brunder!" I growled.

For a second I thought that he would explode in my face. But then he saw that pan, and the movement inside it. His face showed surprise, then dumb unbelief—then a big Satanic grin. Yeah—Marty and Martia were colored green and gold; and I'll give you two guesses about what that reminded Mr. Brunder of.

"Well, well, well, boys!" he growled, his tone all honey and alum, mixed. "Look what was here all the time, though you never noticed! Your old Captain Brunder will just reap the proper rewards of his sole discovery, and you two thieving chisellers can go gabbling on!"

He had the pan in his big mitts, and was marching grandly back toward the ship's airlock.

At first I was ready to pile onto him, myself. And for once the kid's narrow face went all crinkled and thundery, and his fists balled, though he was slight in build.

"Steady, Terry," I said. "I've just come to realize. He's trying to rib us. He'd like to cheat us, but he can't. There are jaws

that work. I'll handle him, when the time comes."

Marty and Martia got a place in the captain's cabin, with a nice sunlamp, turned comfortably low, glowing over them. Mr. Brunder made Terry Miklas help him rig up this special comfort, while I and Toby—the big tomcat who was Brunder's one concession to affection—watched. Toby was a lot like Brunder, even—big-jowled, whiskery, cussed, and somewhat pompous.

"We've got to be properly hospitable to *my* distinguished guests, *Pisces Martis*," Brunder, who liked scientific language, pronounced, meaning to taunt Terry and me. "But don't think, Durbin and Miklas, that we aren't going to finish taking on a cargo of algae. Don't think it for a minute!"

Toby, afflicted by covetous anticipation of his own, rubbed his flanks against me, purring. But Brunder had words for him, too.

"As for you, you devil," he growled, "you bunk out of my quarters tonight! Get fresh, and I'll put you clear outside the ship—without your air-helmet on! . . ."

Yes—Brunder had one of those things for his cat—same as a lady tourist, visiting a domed Terran settlement on

Mars, has for her pet poodle. Quite a character that Brunder was.

But we were all in on something much bigger than we knew.

Later, while Terry and I were out straining algae again, and pressing it into blocks, maybe we got a closer understanding of our true position.

"Popeye," Terry said musingly. "I'm thinking, and I'm sort of scared. What have we got on our hands, anyway? Oh, Marty and Martia are real enough, but somehow they remind me of things like elves and fairies, and the treasure in Alladin's cave . . . Get it?—almost the same mood, somehow—Sweet-and-Strange and What-Do-We-Know? I like that a lot, but it bothers me . . . The real man-sized Martians that weren't men had wonderful skills and sciences, but have been extinct for millions of years . . . And little fishlike creatures would have to be pretty smart to survive so long on Mars, wouldn't they?"

"Uhuh," I agreed absently, feeling a little cold, too, with pendant mystery—apart, even, from the old wind- and dust-scarred ruins that I'd seen brooding under the deep blue sky.

Life went on, nothing very obvious happening at first. At

off-moments Terry would play his harmonica or guitar. Old tunes, mostly. I didn't understand so well what a youngster interested in music wanted in space. But Terry tried to explain: "It's strange grandeur, stars, weird difference of scene, and a need to keep looking for something special to express, Popeye . . ."

From that kind of jumping-off point, Terry would get onto another inevitable subject, if Brunder didn't interrupt. In the quarters I shared with him, I had the picture of a girl; blonde, as pretty as a flower, as mischievous as an imp, and as unlike me as new metal is unlike rust, though they tell me that the eyes are much the same. Sure—Alice always wished that she had been born a boy so that she could go right off into space with her old man, instead of studying in college.

"Nope—you're not so prejudiced in her favor, Popeye," the kid would assure me. "She sure looks wonderful. I hope I'll meet her, sometime, or at least get a letter . . ."

Soon after, I'd go to sleep in my bunk, and I'd dream—with vague unrest—of the kind of little Earthly fish that can creep out on the shore for awhile, or of mice scrambling around and squeaking. This, when there

haven't been mice in spaceships for a long time, not even in the old *Searcher*—no thanks here to Toby, but to the simple trick, easily and early discovered, of letting the air out of the hulls—or letting in the killing vacuum of space—for a few minutes, periodically.

Those dreams of mine—garbled echoes of what was really happening, shall we say?—were only the beginning. Because very soon Mr. Brunder had a complaint.

"What I'd like to know," he growled at breakfast one morning, "is who has been putting string and wire and junk in the water with my *Pisces Martis*? It looks like the trick of an un-instructed child."

"Why—Sir—wire? String? Junk?" Terry asked in obvious puzzlement.

"You heard me," Brunder stated flatly. "For your information, I'll keep my cabin locked from now on."

Until then, Terry missed even the implied accusation, which included intrusion on a captain's privacy. But now something flared up in his eyes, until I had to touch his arm once more, in warning. He sure liked Marty and Martia, and neither of us had looked upon them once—as far as I knew—



since they had been installed in Brunder's quarters.

"Something must be up, Terry," I said later, when we were outside, alone.

"I know," he answered almost gleefully, now. "Mr. Brunder doesn't realize it, but *his Pisces Martis* have been out of that pan—out from under the strainer that covers it, and back in again—after scrounging around for things they want!"

I felt a small chill, again. But after a moment I said, "That sounds innocent enough, Terry. What do you expect Marty and Martia to do? Build up some weird super-apparatus from odds and ends? Demonstrate strange, miraculous powers? They may be humanly intelligent, or even better than that. But they don't seem the kind to bother with a complicated civilization and science."

Terry thought that over. "Those things I didn't even think of, Popeye," he chuckled at last. "But some powers may be very simple, and may depend only on a difference—like being little and mysterious, and rather legendary, for instance. Take some historic diamond, for example . . ."

Well, we got the *Searcher* fully loaded with algae that day, and the hatches secured. That day even Brunder worked

hard. The *Pisces Martis* surely had a power over him. It was as if he had the crown jewels of some lost empire in his pocket. Maybe I sort of felt the same, because this was my deal, too, and Terry's, whether Brunder tried to make it seem different or not.

We spent our last night on Mars. Tired though he was, Terry had to lie on his bunk, doodling with his mouth-organ for awhile, before going to sleep. Because we were about to blast off for Earth, he played *Home Sweet Home* through a few times, softly. Yes, it's an old, old tune, and sentimental. Sometimes I'd say it was corny. After awhile I fell asleep.

I awoke at an indefinite time later with Terry gripping my shoulder in the dark, and whispering tensely: "Shhhh! Listen!"

Yes—I heard it. It was like a tiny xylophone playing—faintly, as if far off, though it must be nearby. There, unmistakable, were the opening bars of *Home Sweet Home*. But then the shift was smooth to some other kind of music, which I was sure no men had ever heard before . . . Because its movement and tone—everything about it—was swift and different, and outside of human art, somehow, though it kept its appeal. I was still

half asleep, though fighting for full consciousness. But maybe this condition sharpened the music's power for me. It tinkled and soared and reached out.

I thought of the Mars of ages past, a younger, populous, more verdant planet, whose people were not extinct through war, but at the height of their glory. And maybe I thought of little lesser beings, idling ornamentally, deep in a pool of a palace garden, perhaps . . . Yeah, sentimental the visions got, even for me, John (Popeye) Durbin . . . And then in a questioning ripple of elfin notes, the music died away, and didn't return again, though Terry and I waited for several minutes.

The kid's fingers had never left my shoulder. Now they dug deeper into my muscles. "Was that sort of thing—somehow—from—Marty and Martia?" he grated thickly. "Sure . . . It's got to be! . . . But how—with *what means?* . . . And—is *that* the way they are, Popeye? Musical? And did they ever hear me play—somehow—before they came to us? That is, were they—*drawn?* . . . Of course! Remember? A few times I was blowing my smallest harmonica—holding it in my mouth—*inside* my oxygen helmet, and *outside* the ship, while we were

processing algae! That's it! They heard me, then! . . . Afterwards, they came . . . And now, they must have been making their music right here in our quarters, Popeye! They're out of that pan in Brunder's room again! They're here—someplace! Come on! Got to hunt! Got to find out more! . . ."

Terry Miklas, with the lore of Olympus and of the leprechauns of Ireland in his background, was all steamed up. Nor could I blame him. For between himself, and two little creatures of Mars he had found a thing of solid kinship. Music.

He bounced out of his bunk, and proceeded to fairly take our quarters apart. With less vigor, I helped. But except for small openings in the bulkheads, where various pipes and conduits ran, we found nothing. Marty and Martia, one or the other or both—in their nocturnal and amphibious prowling—had departed.

To me was left the tough job of quieting Terry's impatience and frustration, and his just curses against Mr. Brunder for keeping the *Pisces Martis* away from us, in his own cabin.

"Simmer down, fella, and keep the peace," I growled. "A little while, more or less, won't matter. You'll learn all you want to know, and things'll straighten

out. Likely as not, our musicians in miniature will come back here themselves. Now let's get some sleep!"

Terry looked angry for a second; then grinned sheepishly.

"Sorry," he muttered. "And thanks."

At dawn we blasted off heavily from Mars. Small pinwheel jets started the ringlike hull of the *Searcher* rotating, to give us the comfort of an artificial gravity, induced by centrifugal force.

Ship-time, split into three watches, now took the place of natural, planetary night and day. Over two months it would take to reach Earth—an interval in which much promised to happen, for much already was queer.

Events went on occurring after we got into space, though many of them not visibly. During Brunder's intervals of duty, or while he was asleep, there were apt to be more sounds as of mice scampering in the hidden byways of the ship, too narrow for human passage—a laugh on Brunder, for these were signs of the free rambling of small characters, basically aquatic but native to Mars, and hence, by necessity, not too bound to their proper element. In fact, the rich Earthly air of the *Searcher*, some of the oxy-

gen of which their gills and skins must have been able to absorb, must have extended their out-of-water range considerably.

Maybe Brunder knew all this. Anyway, his door stayed locked. But I'd known him quite awhile—good and bad—and I could read the old robber pretty good, even when he tried to clam up. I could also taunt him. Captain—hell! He was my partner, and he was way out of line! Clubbing him would have borne us quicker fruit, but taunting was more peaceful and more fun, and it could get results.

"Today even your whiskers look joyful, Brunder," I laughed once. "Have you learned something about *Pisces Martis*—so-called by you—that makes you imagine that they are worth an even bigger bundle of money than you supposed in your first delusions of grandeur?"

Then, just hours later, I had another dig, also with probable grains of truth behind it: "What's the matter, Old Pal? You look mixed up and angry—even down-right scared. Have these mysterious creatures, which of course were found by and belong to the kid and me, revealed qualities to you there in the secrecy of your lair, which makes you suspect that they're more than you can

handle? Still you want to keep them all to yourself, eh—Whole Hog? I wonder if we'll find you gruesomely murdered? Maybe you should lock yourself in your cabin, *alone*, Brunder . . ."

Yes, I knew that these comments struck home at least partly, by the way he reacted. There were no enigmatic grins of cockiness; there was just a sour and rather helpless snarl—"Shut up, Durbin!"

And very soon another thing took place, to heighten the effect on Brunder, though it happened to his cat. Toby didn't tell me the precise details; but suddenly, and for quite awhile afterward, he was a mighty terrified feline, staring wildly into corners and spitting, his fur puffing out like a balloon at the least movement. His eyes were all bloodshot, and his nose was swollen far out of shape. This was the first evidence we had that our little friends were not to be handled without gloves—which we'd been wearing the time that we had touched them—that their flippers carried a potent sting.

Brunder had to catch and medicate, and try to calm down his tomcat. To hear him crooning, "Poor Toby," was incongruous, comic, and for once somewhat pathetic.

I am sure that my campaign

of ridicule would soon have forced Brunder to bring the pan, serving as Marty's and Martia's residence, out into the open again, for all of us to see and observe how they lived. But incidents moved so fast that in the end that became pointless.

One enigma I was especially glad to see cleared up within forty-eight hours of our departure for Earth, because it had been driving Terry Miklas fairly wild.

"Their music, which we haven't heard since, Popeye," he kept saying. "Is it vocal—or what? Dammit, I gotta know!"

To this end he kept playing his harmonica or his guitar softly, during his off-time, hardly sleeping at all, hoping that they'd be drawn to him, and that he would hear the tiny xylophone again, and see.

So it happened, when we were both off-watch, and sprawled on our bunks. We noticed nothing of the silent entry. But suddenly there was a tinkly warble of sound—a sort of chord, molded like a questioning chirp. Both of us looked toward its source, which brought our gaze to the shelf over the washbasin. Up against the glass tumbler which I used for brushing my teeth, was a little gold-green shape—Marty, it must be. Two claw-tipped-flippers were cupped to-

gether against the thin vitreous material. The beady black eyes were watchful. Like many a little animal on Earth, he knew how to stay perfectly still.

To be sure not to frighten him, I moved only my eyes. And Terry had only to lift his fingers a few inches to bring his harmonica to his lips. He blew one enquiring ripple of notes on it. Then we waited and watched. For each of us in our opposite bunks, the distance of our visitor from our eyes was only about a yard. Yes, this was surely Marty, the bold one, and we saw just what he did as again strange, haunting music, as of some tiny xylophone, honored our quarters. For maybe five seconds it lasted; then it died away.

There was a long pause before Terry Miklas said: "Did you see how it works, Popeye? His claws, vibrating rapidly against the glass of the tumbler, made the tinkling. The way his flippers were cupped and placed and shifted, at the same time, must have varied the pitch and modulated the sounds. That's all there is to it, then. I suppose any sort of fairly resonant material would serve as well as a tumbler, though with a different musical quality. Maybe that's why, from what we hear, Marty and Martia like to collect

junk in the place where they live,—to see what sonic quality they can get out of it. . . ."

Terry sounded quiet and relieved, now, as if at an enigma solved. But I wasn't so satisfied, yet.

"Okay," I said. "We understand that much. But there are more mysteries. For instance, is the music instinctive, like the singing of birds? Or is it created, consciously—as an art? What I mean is—is *mind* working here, Terry?"

The kid chuckled, and a funny smile came to his lips. "Did you hear what the man asked, Marty?" he remarked. "Yep—there are lots of questions. Me—I'm wondering what you came to us for—out of your native icecap—that first time. Oh, there was my mouth organ blowing, of course. But there's always a quest beyond music, isn't there? Me—I've felt it too. What is it with you, Marty? Or don't you quite know, either? Except that maybe there's distance and time and strangeness in it."

Terry's own restlessness was in his musing tone. Of course he didn't expect an answer. But in a way, he got one.

The little green-gold figure reared up against the tumbler again. Flippers were cupped and pressed against its surface.

Claws vibrated. What came forth was still a tinkling; but it was molded—or modulated—by those small handlike members, as tongue and lips mold a human voice, to form syllables and words:

“Kkorrekkt—Mmmarrtee?”

Yes. Call it another approach to vocal speech—used just in parrotlike mimicry, or with the potentials of real speech that might be learned, behind it. Real communication between aliens? There had been other intelligences in the solar system. But today, until now, at least, Man knew only himself.

Startled, Terry and I both sat suddenly bolt upright in our bunks. It was a mistake, for Marty was startled, too. He flopped from the shelf to the deck, and skittered away, seeming to run on his flippers, no doubt to return to Brunder's quarters and Martia by a route best known to himself.

I felt a chill and a thrill. “Things get better and better,” I laughed. “Well—another time, Terry . . .”

We didn't realize then how near these glamorous little people who had come into our lives—with all the romantic and violent history of Mars in their background—could bring us to disaster. No, we are sure, now

that it was not a designed and sinister plotting on their part; it was a more innocent and explorative tampering, like that of children. But in space that can be serious enough.

It was during my watch in the control room. Everything was at norm. The lights burned; the air-purifier units murmured sleepily. That was all. After a ship has full acceleration and is on a fixed course across the void, the rockets are silent; no machine moves except those necessary to maintain life and comfort. I was just sitting, reading a book, anticipating no trouble, of which there was no sign. Or had I heard a small, scrambling rodent-like sound?

Suddenly, though, one of the five big drive-rockets, mounted in a cluster at the center of our ship's ringlike hull, began to roar at full thrust. Since its companions remained inactive, it gave a one-sided reaction, that quickly had our old *Searcher* turning lazily edge over edge, like a spinning coin. Our other wheel-like rotation, to maintain centrifugal gravity, continued, but its effect, with new forces acting, became disturbed and confused. As an automatic alarm siren began to howl I toppled from my stool, went rolling and tumbling painfully up one wall to the ceiling, and down the

opposite wall to the deck again. But of course instead of stopping here, my cycle of tumbling proceeded to repeat itself at an accelerating rate.

Mingled with the thunder of that runaway rocket-tube and the siren's shriek, was the rattle of loose and rolling equipment and supplies, and shouts—from Terry and Brunder, aware now of danger, and no doubt trying rather helplessly to reach the control room. But in a matter of seconds the ship would be spinning—like the coin I mentioned—so fast that we'd all be pinned down by centrifugal force. The rate of spin, driven by that loony atomic jet, would go right on mounting inexorably, until the substances of various density composing our flesh—water, fat, and so forth—either separated into layers as in a centrifuge, or the ship blew apart.

Encouraged by its absolute necessity, I managed to catch onto a girder on that second roll up the wall. Then like a crab I worked my way to the manual controls. First I cut out the robot piloting device, which must be the source of that rocket-tube's going haywire. Then I opened all rockets, and fiddled around a little with their throttles, to balance their thrust. That crazy roll ended.

Next I had to center the ship back on course, and use the opposed retard tubes, to cut the excess velocity we had picked up. All this was routine stuff, done by the time a somewhat bruised Terry, and a similarly bruised and trailing Brunder, arrived in the control room.

"You okay, Popeye?" Terry began. "Just knocked around some? . . ." But of course Brunder's lusty roar drowned him out.

"What in hell are you doin', Durbin!" he hollered. "What kind of a nincompoopish trick was that you just pulled?"

He smelled of booze. He didn't drink too much ordinarily; but of late he'd been hitting the jug—I suspected not without reason. I'm no prim critic myself; but I do especially dislike being bawled out by a drunk when I'm sober. And now I had a suspicion which made me doubly sure that I wasn't going to take any blab from Brunder.

I went over to the robot piloting device, and banged on the side of its metal cabinet. Out of its bottom there skittered two little green-gold forms that quickly and prudently lost themselves among surrounding equipment.

"Brunder," I said, "I thought that *you* had made yourself personally responsible for *Pisces*

*Martis*. So why do you let them try to take the insides of the robot pilot apart?"

Well, first he just stared, looking sort of sick and defeated. Then he was muttering to himself: "Hell! Still getting out? . . . I tied down that mesh cover . . . And there was no sign . . . Smart, they are . . . Like people! . . . Gonna be rich, if I live . . ."

Yeah—so you see how Brunder's mind worked. But with the job on my hands of getting things put back into place aboard the old *Searcher*, and maybe capturing and restraining the habitual runaways, I couldn't dwell on the matter. Brunder did help me with the work. By the end of my watch, order was restored. There was also a gratifying development when I returned to quarters.

Terry met me there with a wide grin. "I've got them, Pop-eye," he announced. "Marty and Martia. They came to me, of their own free will, for refuge. So we've got them away from Brunder."

They were there in our wash-bowl, along with some water, and Martian algae for food, and a broken watch and a spool of fine-gauge copper wire which Terry had given them to fool with. He had also secured another wire mesh over their new

home, in the hope that this time it would restrain their wanderings.

"Good boy, Terry," I said. "Of course now we will keep Brunder locked out."

Up from the washbowl came a buzzing voice, which originated in small claws vibrating against that worn-out time-piece:

"Hhheello-o-o, Poppaiee-eee!"

"Hello, yourself!" I responded, startled.

Terry grinned wider than before. "You see, I've been teaching them," he declared.

Matters seemed to have taken a turn for the better. But this condition endured for only a few hours.

I was asleep when that warning siren shrieked again. First making sure that Marty and Martia hadn't escaped, I rushed out, not pausing to relock our door. I found no one in the control room. But a red light was flashing danger. Since there were no accompanying signs of trouble, I concluded that the difficulty was in the panel itself. I was right. It took me five minutes to correct a short-circuit, which began to seem unusual, anyway, as if arranged. This thought was belated. Still half asleep I must have been, to be so dull.



The kid would be in the galley, now, doing his extra chore of preparing dinner. Brunder was the one who should be watching the controls, but wasn't. Damn him, and my thick-headedness! What was he up to? I raced back to my quarters, and found my suspicions confirmed. Marty and Martia were gone from the washbowl! So were the algae and the water and the wire and the watch.

Passing the galley, I hollered to Terry. Together, we located our captain at the lower-level airlock. But just as we rushed forward, he closed the inner door on us, working the mechanism with the levers inside the lock-chamber, so that all we could do was peer in at him through the bullseye window of the door.

He held up something for us to see—a large whiskey demijohn of dark brown glass, its mouth plugged and waxed, and its wicker jacket removed. It must have been the same jug that he had been toiling to finish. But there was no whiskey in it now—just a murky, flaky liquid, and sinuous movement . . .

Brunder was wearing a space suit. Now, with an air of alcoholic drama and clowning, he opened the outer door of the airlock, and heaved the jug out-

ward with all his might. It sped away from the ship, growing quickly smaller, and then vanishing.

As far as I am concerned, if I could have opened that inner door just then, my boot would have sent our captain sailing right after that demijohn of his—into the vastness and eternal silence and cold of the void.

"*They* were inside that thing!" Terry Miklas said in a terrible voice, just above a whisper. "Marty and Martia! You must have seen them, too! Has there ever been such an example of senseless, drunken meanness? . . . Don't try to stop me from fixing Brunder this time, Popeye!"

Yeah—slight though Terry Miklas was, the way his face looked then, there was murder in the offing. Up to then, I might have helped commit it. But I'm a peaceful, patient fella—maybe to a fault. Besides, now, certain thoughts came to me. So, at the instant that Brunder unbolted that inner door, I grabbed Terry, and hung on with all my might.

Brunder swaggered and staggered forth. Of course he wasn't very vulnerable in a space suit, as he no doubt knew. Muffled a bit, his voice reached us through his helmet.

"Finished," he pronounced.

"Dammitall—ff-finish-hed! No more trouble. Musical Martian f-fish gone for good! Can't have 'em wrecking my ship, can I? Captain's duty! Gotta protect the old *Searcher*, don't I? You gentlemen know that! So—banish the wonderful, pretty, music-makin' little devils! Give 'em a whiskey-jug planet! Haw-haw! . . . Must of come out of a whiskey jug, anyhow—same as Aladdin's genie out of a lamp! Haw-haw-haw . . . No—don't try to go after 'em in the life-rocket! . . . Fixed so you won't get it working till it's too late! Haw-haw-haw . . ."

Terry Miklas was practically frothing at the mouth, like a mad dog, by then. He couldn't even say anything. I guess he couldn't think of words terrible enough to throw at Brunder.

Still managing somehow to hold him, I hauled him off to our quarters, and in this privacy, proceeded to put him straight on a few points.

"Now wait a minute, Hot Head!" I growled. "The setup ain't what it seems! There's a bug in it . . . In the first place, I know Brunder, and he's not nearly as drunk as he pretends! In the second place, our little friends may look delicate, but they have some of the imperishable qualities of the elves they

resemble. They are used to freezing up and thawing out with the icecaps of Mars. Sealed in a demijohn of dark brown glass, which affords them effective protection from even the hard ultra-violet rays of the sun, they should be in no danger. In the third place, drunk or sober, Brunder would never throw away a chance to make a lot of money, no matter how much trouble and risk it had caused him. In fact, he really risked his neck facing you just now—which makes me sure that he thinks he's got something so big that it's like some vast treasure to him, over which he's gone considerably nuts, and ready to take longer and crazier chances to grab it all for himself . . ."

Here I paused to let my logic soak into Terry's head. Already he was showing calmer interest.

"In the fourth place," I continued, "though the interplanetary regions are enormous, anything moving in them—in a vacuum, that is, follows a fixed and mathematically predictable path, and can't be hard to trace and locate, as long as you know the starting point and the dominant vectors controlling direction and velocity, and an approximation of the lesser forces acting—for instance, the minor muscular forces with which

Brunder threw that jug from the ship. In fact the latter is about the only thing which distinguishes the motion of the demijohn from the motion of the ship—until we start using rocket power again to decelerate, and to modify our direction, slightly. Otherwise, the jug will follow right along with the *Searcher*, in a gradual inward curve toward the Earth, with a slight lateral drift of a number of miles per hour, imparted by Brunder's pitching arm. Offhand, I'd say that the demijohn will fall into a rather eccentric but planetary orbit around the sun, somewhat larger than Earth's orbit.

"Yes, Brunder has all the necessary data to figure out where the jug is at a given moment, and pick it up again. It's his trick to gain full possession of Marty and Martia—because we're supposed to think that they're hopelessly lost, if not dead. The catch is that I was in the control room, and have all of that data, too—I have the time, and the position and speed of the ship well in mind, and can do well enough with mathematics . . . Fifth place—well, I won't risk making you mad by even mentioning that . . ."

I stopped talking. Still, the way Mr. Brunder loved that old tomcat of his kept hovering in

my mind, as evidence that even he would avoid deliberate cruelty to Marty and Martia.

Terry had cooled off a lot by now. In fact a kind of secret gleam came into his eye. "Thanks for the dope, Popeye," he said. "So we just ride out the trip to Earth, hand in our resignation notices well in advance, watch Brunder for tricks while cooperating with him generally, though not too well to make him suspicious; and get set to act fast as soon as we arrive home. Right?"

I nodded.

So it was. The remaining two months of journeying dwindled away tediously, but without special incident.

When we arrived at the White Sands spaceport, there was a complication. The feminine gender is a sweet nuisance. And Alice, my daughter, was there beyond the safety barrier of the grounding platform, to meet me, and also maybe to satisfy her curiosity concerning some comments about Terry Miklas, that I'd put into letters mailed from Marsport. Also, she had herself all shined up for a big homecoming celebration for me—at some grand restaurant, some place, I suppose.

So it was "Hello, Alice Honey—you look wonderful—this is Terry Miklas—Terry, meet

Alice . . ." Yeah—all this from me in one hurried gasp.

I knew by Terry's expression that he found her even more attractive than he had hoped; but the pressure of haste put him in an awful position.

"I'm very glad to know you, Alice," he stammered. "I—ah—in a couple weeks, I hope to show you how glad. Only, now—Dad and I have a very pressing matter to take care of instantly, and—I—"

Yeah—right away Alice cut in, protesting, her heart-shaped face going soft and hurt: "Dad! I see you so seldom, and—good night—can't I at least go along with you in this 'pressing matter'?"

We didn't have a half-hour or so to waste in explanations. Terry hadn't yet learned the difficulties of arguing with a woman, so I cut things short in the only way possible.

"Of course, Alice," I said. "Pull in your neck, and come on—night-out dress and all. I'd be ashamed to think you're the wilting kind. We'll find some old burlap and a space suit for you, some place."

Don't ask me how—by what scrapings of the last dregs of saved money, borrowing, and the use of friends for favors—we did what we did. Don't be kid-

ded—the operation of space craft large and small, will always be expensive, even if atomic power is supposed to be cheap. Anyway, inside of five hours of the landing of the old *Searcher*, Terry and I had rented a fleet little Warrington Dart, which bore us up through the atmosphere with a smooth acceleration that made even Alice's eyes shine, though she had seldom been off the Earth before.

I had my calculations all made and checked, and we took the shortest course possible, almost sure that Brunder couldn't have acquired a craft ahead of us.

But he had! Our radar showed the ghost of another Warrington, a few hundred miles beyond our bows, and sticking right to our intended path.

"The stinker!" Terry growled, his face twisted with strain. "Pour on the coal, Popeye! But not too much so that we have to waste a lot of time decelerating later."

I'm an old-timer, and he didn't have to tell me that. From my memory and my calculations, the velocity of objects moving in a planetary orbit at a somewhat more than Earthly distance from the sun, was in my head. About eighteen miles per

second. The rest, though, called for skill, something like that of a racetrack driver pitted against opponents; choosing just the proper instant for a controlled burst of speed—not too much or too little—curving in at just the correct angle for proper approach, with as small as possible a margin of error to be compensated for later. Uuh—and I knew that I could advantageously go quite a bit faster than those eighteen miles per second at times—with good results . . .

Anyway I gained some on Brunder—maybe because he didn't notice soon enough that he was being followed. Then the two Warringtons stayed even-even, Brunder's ship reflecting a spark of sunlight up ahead. A few miles difference. So it was for five days. It was a tense time—not so good for young people to take care of love matters. But on a couple of occasions I saw Terry and Alice hand in hand almost absently, while they talked tensely about an unrelated subject.

"There it is—what you and Dad are looking for!" Alice said at last, pointing to a tiny dot on the radar screen. "You have said several times that it is a whiskey demijohn—have I got that straight?" Here her brows persisted in going puzzled and

amused, as if Terry and I were an awful pair of screwballs, to be rushing madly across space on such a quest.

Terry nodded and grinned sheepishly. "A whiskey jug world," he chuckled. "That sounds loony, I know. But it is inhabited by the nicest pair of little people you'll ever want to meet."

Well, now we were sweating the chase out—with the advantage remaining on the other side. We donned space suits. We had weapons, and presumably Brunder had them, too. I didn't intend to risk Planetary Patrol discipline by using mine, unless provoked. But we had to be ready . . .

My throat was getting raw from trying to swallow my tension, when, peering through my small telescope, I saw the airlock of the Warrington up ahead, open, and an armored figure leap out.

Terry also had a scope. He gave a yell, and scrambled for our own lock, meanwhile explaining: "I see it there—floating free—the jug! Brunder dived for it, drawing a tether cable behind him! He—no—he missed! A burst of speed, Pop-eye!"

I complied, and we leapt close very fast. Movement, then, was quick indeed. Terry jumped

from our lock without a tether. And he missed, too! No—not exactly! He'd missed Brunder and the demijohn, yes—but he'd caught Brunder's cable, between our enemy and the other Warrington. After that I didn't see some of what took place, because our ship, moving a little faster, now swept past, and I had to busy myself with the retard jets to get back on the scene.

Well, should I describe that brawl in space—the wide difference in weight—mass, that is, now—of the two opponents? The agility, the skill, the spirit? Let's skip the buildup. When I could see again what was going on, Brunder and Terry were grappling with each other. Brunder had of course been trying to draw himself back to his ship with his tether cable, for another leap at the jug, while Terry Miklas' aim was to prevent that. But now it was big muscles against lesser ones—or so I thought with sinking heart. Fighting in space is still fighting, though some points are a bit special. To hit an opponent can be a mistake. He's armored, and hard to hurt. Besides, he'll be propelled out of your reach, while, by reaction, you will be driven in the opposite direction.

**Brunder did hit Terry—with**

approximately the above results. Terry's clear plastic helmet was dented but not broken. He shot away; but instead of floating free he just slid along the now tautened tether cable, letting it slip through his gloved fingers. Then he leapt at Brunder again, jerking the tether to give his body the necessary impulse.

This time he got hold of Brunder's shoulders from behind—an extremely advantageous position. Because a space suit has a necessary soft spot, where flexibility for bending and sitting down prevents the manufacturers from putting any metal except light wire. Oh, there's ballooning effect from the air-pressure inside; but a metal-shod boot driven with even light force can easily overcome that.

Well, here was where Terry went to work, with a furious and methodical persistence, always hanging onto Brunder's shoulders. Kicks were followed by more kicks, till I thought it would never end. My peacable nature had been frustrating Terry Miklas too long.

Alice wouldn't watch. "You men, Dad!" she complained. "Come on—let me try my space-woman's skill at completing this curious comedy—getting the



demijohn that we came for, that is . . ."

There was no danger. With a tether, she too jumped from the lock, and like a football player grounding the pigskin, she grabbed the free-floating jug. I drew her back to the Warrington.

Terry and I took Brunder to his own small craft, and left him strapped in the pilot seat, where he sat groaning and cursing. Then we returned to our ship, and began the return trip to Earth, our minds only absently on this objective.

For we had what we had come to get. Maybe an adverse enchantment was ended. I even thought that maybe we would get rich.

The jug was half full of unfrozen water. The radiations of the fierce sun of space had been converted to heat by the dark brown glass. Inside, beyond cloudy masses of algae from Mars, were two small animated shapes that could not be mistaken.

Terry lashed the jug down. In these small craft there was no centrifugal substitute for gravity. We sat looking at the jug. Various factors about it produced a mixed pattern of whimsy, humor, and seriousness. Terry chuckled.

"You can hold it in your

hands," he said. "But as poor Brunder first hinted, it has all the attributes of an inhabited planet. It is even vaguely spherical. It has an atmosphere within it, and ample water, and a suitable climate for plants. The algae, with the aid of sunlight, provides both food for animal life, and oxygen to breathe. And it is a peopled world. Its one failure was its short duration as an effective free planet. Only two months in an orbit around the sun! But it was capable of enduring much longer—perhaps as many eons as a major world, even. Perhaps it might have gone on to who knows what great future."

Terry Miklas was kidding. Still his eyes held a speculative gleam—almost a sadness for the way we had terminated a possibility.

Alice looked strange, too.

In another moment we heard the tinkle of the elfin xylophone once more—Marty and Martia cupping their flippers against the inner surface of the demijohn, and tapping, and making the glass ring, and modulating the sounds they remembered from Terry's teaching:

"Hhhello-o-o, Tterreee . . . Ppoppaiee-ee! Weeee arrrr-r awlll frrrennnzzz! . . ."

Then, briefly, came the music, eerie and groping and faint,



older by far than the human race, and not of human creation.

I glanced at Alice. She looked at the little green-gold figures, bronzed and blurred through the tinted glass. Her gaze, meeting that of beady, intelligent eyes, was awfully soft. It made her beautiful.

"Dad, Terry," she said uncertainly. "Even from all your talk about Marty and Martia, I didn't know that they were like this!"

A mood came over me, too. I thought of another Alice—in a book—in Wonderland. Kid stuff? Lots of big, capable men I can think of, would disagree. Ah, yes—whimsy. The refreshing pause to find relief from the humdrum in charming nonsense:

*"The time has come," the  
Walrus said,  
"To talk of many things—  
Of shoes and ships and  
sealing wax  
And cabbages and kings  
And why the sea is boiling  
hot  
And whether pigs have  
wings . . ."*

In another way the feel of all was here, too.

Through the sides of the demi-john, I saw evidence of artcraft on Marty's and Martia's part. There was a screen of algae fibre, woven as humans weave cloth or mats—warp and woof

in an over-under pattern. The screen was probably designed to provide shade from the sun, which I guess could get fairly strong, even inside the dark glass. The screen was held at the ends by an arrangement of copper wire—the same wire, doubtless, that Terry had once dumped into our washbasin aboard the *Searcher*. Old Brunder, with some thought of his own, had put it into the jug. And our friends had used it, demonstrating a primitive culture, beyond which they had no reason to go, except in music.

Now Terry Miklas gave a low, short whistle. Then his talk went rambling, again: "How was it like out here in space, in a world of your own, Marty and Martia? Was it hard to take, or was it peace? And did we just now spoil that? Do you want to return to Mars, or do you want to go much farther? Maybe someday we'll be really able to converse, and you'll be able to tell me how it is with yourself—if you know, as sometimes I think I don't quite know, about me. . . . Music is restless stuff."

"Go get your harmonica, Terry," Alice urged. "Play something for them. . . ."

Yeah—here was a nice dreamy young fella, born of various parentage in New York City.

And here was my daughter, not too unlike him in background. She had no superlative talent, though she was good at the piano. But then, here were a pair of mites, different from them about as completely as was possible—in size, structure, origin; maybe even in basic protoplasm. But between the two halves of this foursome—with almost no other language at all, yet, there was a bond of likeness and understanding.

So I guess that the pattern for the immediate future was already pretty well set, during those few days of returning to Earth. I had to guide the Warrington, being the only one who could still think of routine matters. Terry would be tooting on his mouth organ; then Alice would try it, too. Then Marty or Martia would tinkle a response, sometimes against the sides of the demijohn. Or they'd emerge from it for awhile, and tap against something else; sometimes it was notes that they produced, but as often it was words and phrases that they were learning to repeat.

Yes, in this romantic atmosphere of contrasting cultures and mystery, love bloomed very soon between Alice, my daughter, and Terry Miklas. It was a unity of interest, and of about everything else that counts, I suppose.

How would I know? I was just a mildly cynical but sympathetic outsider, whose consent, if it was needed at all, came about as easily and casually as anything could, two days before we got the Warrington back to the White Sands spaceport:

"Why sure, Terry and Alice . . ."

With that much settled, we got down quickly to another problem.

"Just what happens to Marty and Martia, Dad?" Alice asked.

"Umhm-m—what does?" I enquired. "We have an awful lot of expenses to meet, as we all know. It was expected that our small guests from the Red Planet would be instrumental in defraying them."

"Not if it means selling them, like chattels, into slavery in a zoo or museum, Dad!" Alice warned. "They are sentient beings, and our friends! Anyhow, there's another way—more lucrative in the long run. Like Terry they're artists. People will want to see them, and hear them play—in the theatre, on television, everywhere! All we need is a couple of weeks more—to perfect an act and a program for Marty and Martia, and maybe Terry, too—perhaps even me!"

"Lucrative" was the word that got me most. Yeah, money, that

means. It was the most reasonable subject that I had heard mentioned in quite a while. And I was proud to know that my daughter had a good, practical head.

Of course there are novelty numbers, and novelty numbers. Some take hold, some don't. The public can be pretty blase, even when you're dead certain that you have the best thing in the universe. I was sure we couldn't miss, yet I didn't know. Sadly I felt some hopes of at last having a few dollars to rub together, possibly being indefinitely postponed. But with both my daughter and my prospective son-in-law gone against the old plan, and with my own self leaning in that direction also, what could I do but stretch my luck a little further?

Terry and Alice got married in White Sands. Then there was a fast scramble for another loan—fortunately small this time. Included in our luggage when we moved to a couple of adobe shacks out in the desert, was a piano and a custom-made case, like a suitcase, but with a plastic tank inside.

I lived in the other shack, leaving Alice and Terry and their charges alone a lot. I roamed the nearby hills and kept watch, remembering the

recent past. Of course I kept a gun.

Our first try at show business was in Phoenix, Arizona, and all my previous doubts were instantly dissipated. The first agent's eyes fairly bulged at the demonstration performance, and he cursed in wonder. "Maybe you're fibbing about where you got these fish," he said. "But do I care?"

The sound-truck that belonged to a big local theatre of dignity was in the streets twenty minutes later, announcing solemnly: "A special fifteen minute feature will extend our evening program to 11:45 p. m. This is to introduce something sincerely unheard of by us before today. Something utterly charming from another world—Mars, we are told. Beyond this, words may fail us, or seem crudely sensational. Therefore, come and discover for yourselves. . . ."

So, that night, Marty and Martia performed to a packed house, and incidentally, to a far larger television audience.

I guess the basic framework of the program was corny. Terry Miklas was a rather shy and awkward master of ceremonies, keeping his harmonica and guitar with him to draw out and encourage Marty and Martia with his own music. Alice, at the piano, stayed in the back-

ground for the same purpose.

When Terry and Alice began to play, the star performers scrambled up a little wooden ladder and out of their tank, which was set on a table, and proceeded to enjoy themselves more or less extemporaneously on all the apparatus that had been arranged for them. *Home Sweet Home* came out on steel strings stretched over a sounding board, and on a tumbler, in unison, and to the end. But it was the only number that they played that anybody except Alice, Terry, and myself had ever heard before.

Very soon Marty and Martia were performing alone—funny, dainty, intent little monsters, the color of patinaed gild, and as beautiful as a childhood fancy. Now they were at the steel strings and the tumbler; now their claws vibrated a small drum, while they crouched on its head. Now their flippers were cupped against pieces of resonant wood.

Their music was faint and weird and aching, and it seemed to reach out endlessly with its eerie richness. The amplifier system took something away from it, until very soon Terry Miklas turned it off. Then, among those thousands of people in the audience, you could have

heard a pin drop. I was out there; I knew.

Marty and Martia played for seven minutes; then they retired independently to their tank, to freshen their gills. But back in the water, they didn't stop entertaining. They made the sides of the tank vibrate, pronouncing words that they knew:

"Hhello-o-o! Wwe-ee arrr-r ffrrom-m Mmarrzz! Yuuu arrr-r owrrr ffrrennnzz! . . ." they buzzed.

Some of this I shouldn't bother to tell. It is old, now, and everybody heard, at the time. The reports about Marty and Martia, who had no other names that we ever found out, went everywhere. And later performances were no less enthusiastically received than the one of that first night, when at times the audience was as quiet as the dead. At others, it roared with laughter, or brought the house down with applause. Encores extended that first show to fully three times its allotted fifteen minutes. The important play that preceded Marty's and Martia's act, was almost forgotten.

As the people got up to leave, I listened to the various comments—pleased, endearing, and comic. A surprising number of folks didn't believe what they had seen and heard.

"Trick stuff, sure, but I like good tricks," a fat man announced to a pal. "Ever hear the old joke about the drunk, the mouse pianist, and the miniature piano? . . ."

At supper in our hotel, after the show, Alice's and Terry's faces shone like a couple of bright new pennies.

"We made it!" Terry Miklas said jubilantly. "Or rather—they did! It's an avalanche! I wonder if they appreciate all the flowers they got. . . ."

"What I'm trying to do is pin down exactly the secret of their success," I offered. "Of course I know—I *feel* the answer coming to me from all sides. But how do you get all of it into words? Let's see—well—in the first place their music would still be beautiful even if it was well-known instead of being completely novel. Then they're the only actual *sentient* beings—I think we can say that it is proven now that they are that, can't we?—other than Genus Homo of Earth, that anyone has ever seen. Then, behind them, is the mystic glamor of ancient Mars. A lot of the rest is whimsy. They're like little characters in a myth or legend which can't be, but that we all wish for. Yet they are—unbelievably—real. . . ."

"Yes, Dad!" Alice broke in

eagerly. "I hardly supposed that a rough spaceman like you ever thought along such lines! But you've got it pretty well stated! They have some of the charm of the Lorelei, and of fairy princesses and ruined castles and immortal woodland sprites and lost treasures—maybe even of Santa Claus! And they're *real*! They're a thing that our hard civilization wants and needs to rest itself—a little of special poetry, music, and magic! They're a very unique blend!"

Well, that night a dozen would-be sponsors discovered that possible remarks like "We're from Mars" could be made to rhyme with something about stars, and—just for example—some manufacturer's candy bars. The idea, of course, was to make up commercial jingles, and have Marty and Martia vibrate them out in words and tinkles. I guess it could have been done without much difficulty. But I felt very sour to the idea right away, as did Terry and Alice.

"We know that what we've got is good," I told these gentlemen. "We don't mean ever to corn it up."

No, I don't think we lost a thing, here, by taking a firm stand. In fact I believe we gained in quality and respect.

From Phoenix we swung west,

performing in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Then we moved east again, to Minneapolis, and south to St. Louis and New Orleans, and up to Chicago and Detroit and Cleveland, and on to New York. By then the names of Marty and Martia were up in lighted letters so big that you could have flown our old freighter, the *Searcher*, right through them. Three brief weeks of this kind of glory we had in all. For the time being, we were cleaning up in a very practical manner. But in the long run the pair that were our bonanza turned out to be fool's gold. From the beginning, my memory and a hunch kept informing me that even those three weeks were borrowed time. Something bad just had to happen.

It was I who suggested a vacation up on the Maine coast. It was hot July, then. Terry and Alice agreed quickly. But I think that what we all wanted was not so much a rest, but, subconsciously, a place to entrench for trouble. Of course the subconscious mind isn't always very logical. The Maine coast was no shelter against the legal suit which was what I expected mostly—not that any of us minded paying off. But trouble, when you feel sure that it is on the way, but can't tell at what

moment, or just how it will make itself known, can be magnified into a nebulous phantom which frightens the deep, primitive part of a person. A legal contact could be one approach. But there could be others. Someone at night, for instance. With this in mind, we had hired two armed guards.

As matters turned out, we were taken by surprise for one vital instant. It was summer dusk, soft and rich. The day before, we had made an interesting discovery—final proof of Martia's femininity. Visible within her small, semi-transparent body, were a dozen tiny and incomplete duplicates of Marty and herself.

Alice was still smiling over this fact, there in the kitchen. Terry and I were also present, enjoying a pair of beers. The door to the garden was open. Fifty yards away a brook babbled. The Atlantic was half a mile distant. Right behind my chair, on another small table, was Marty's and Martia's plastic tank.

We heard footsteps grinding on pebbles. I turned, seeing dimly someone approaching from the garden—a man in slacks and checkered shirt and a hat. It could have been Mills, one of the guards, or a farmer neighbor . . . I know now that, back

among the trees, he must have been waiting for a moment when neither Mills nor Davis, the other guard, were in front of our kitchen door. He came right on into the kitchen without a greeting, and in a startling instant, until he stood as close as I was to Marty's and Martia's tank, and in a better position to take hold of it.

Not till then did we realize who he was. I guess we were too used to seeing him in the cover-all of a spaceman. Besides, his scraggy whiskers were shaved off.

While Terry and I were scrambling furiously and defensively to our feet, he grinned kind of self-consciously, and said, "Hello, Durbin and Miklas. Weren't you expecting me—sometime? I guess I have certain rights of discovery, concerning these sensational beings, too. Financial ones, anyway."

Brunder's big hairy mitt was curved around that transparent tank. That was a bad circumstance, all around. My thought, then, was that he was talking about money, for which I acknowledge respect; though, where Marty and Martia were concerned, I realized more fully now that it wasn't the main thing with me. When we had returned to White Sands from space, after performing a rescue,

I hadn't worried too much about Brunder, feeling that his own nefarious attempt to grab the *Pisces Martis* for himself alone was too dangerously fresh for him to try legal action against us. But now that incident was a fading memory, and we had begun to look rich, and hence possibly guilty in the eyes of the world. So I was more wary, now. Maybe I misjudged him, but my further thought was still that Brunder just wasn't the kind to have any control over our small friends, whatsoever.

So I was all swift and perhaps ill-advised defensive action. I grabbed that tank, and he took hold of it tighter, and Terry leapt close to help me. For a second we all tussled; then all three of us went down on the floor. The tank, which we all still clutched, was overturned; its wire top came off, and its contents sloshed violently . . .

Alice gave an almost agonized cry. Terry said "Damn!" I used stronger language than that as I picked myself up for further action. But the last that any of us saw of Marty and Martia, they were scrambling away like mice into the thickening shadows of the garden.

"You numbskulls!" Brunder yelled sheepishly. "What in hell did you start messing with me,

for! All I wanted was to talk about my just rights, privately, letting bygones be bygones. Now look what happened!"

Our worthy ex-captain had a point there, I had to admit to myself—withal a doubtful one. But I had plenty of counterpoints of my own.

"Why didn't you announce yourself like a man, instead of sneaking around and barging in like a cockroach, Brunder!" I hollered back at him. "You could have had your stinking share of the money we got from the programs! For all I mind, you can still have it, and be damned!"

He looked glumly furious, but said no more just then. He and I followed Terry and Alice out into the garden, where they were calling "Marty!" and "Martia!" But the only answer in the young night was the sleepy and lonely chirp of the crickets, and—the babble of the brook nearby.

"That's it!" Brunder grumbled. "They would naturally have aimed for the water, wouldn't they?"

"Bright man, ain't you?" I snapped at him sarcastically.

"Knothead, yourself, Durbin!" he snarled.

"I've a hunch that they'd make right for the ocean, via the creek," Terry Miklas said musingly. "Hey—let's all get in

the car—drive down there right away! . . ."

So that was what we did, leaving the guards at the house. What practical good the excursion was supposed to accomplish, I don't know. At the abrupt rocky shore, the brook became narrow and deep and gushing—no place to look for two small fishlike creatures, though we tried that futilely with flashlights. A big white moon was rising out over the Atlantic, its light making a twinkling path on the waves. Millions of years ago the ocean must have been dreamy and enigmatic like this, as no doubt it still would be, for millions of years to come.

We all walked along the shore, looking out at the water helplessly. At last Terry Miklas started one of his absentminded soliloquies:

"Maybe the sea was what they wanted, what they came with us for. On Mars there haven't been any real seas for much longer than you can imagine. Trans-spatial migrants searching for a thing only dimly left in their race-memories—was that what they were? . . . We wanted to take care of you, Marty and Martia. But I guess you didn't feel free. Well, good luck. But the Atlantic is awfully big and dark and deep. I hope you don't get into trouble in it. . . ."



After a minute, Alice asked sadly: "Well—what do we do now?"

"One thing we can do," I growled, "is get back to the house and figure up what old Stinker Brunder, here, thinks we owe him, and pay him off so he'll go away where we won't have to look at him any more. It's worth the price."

Mr. Brunder looked furious again, but maybe sort of hurt, too.

"Don't worry, Durbin," he snarled in return. "I wouldn't want anything that you thought was yours around me to make me itch! So you'll get a deduction of a few thousand from your check to me—to cover yours and Miklas' share of that load of algae brought from Mars in the *Searcher*."

"Ah—now it's Mr. Generosity, huh?" I sneered at him. "Listen, Brunder—I wouldn't let you forget that algae, or our share, or who did most of the work. . ."

It's funny how people are. I hated Brunder less now than I used to; yet I was riding him harder.

At the house I made out his check. He said "Thanks," and stalked away with awkward pride, which somehow made me recall how he used to scratch the back of Toby, that old tomcat of his, and of how once—have I

even mentioned that before this?—I thought I'd heard him croon to Marty and Martia, when he had them behind the locked doors of his cabin aboard the *Searcher*. But we sure had gotten on each other's nerves during that trip!

When he was gone I said to my daughter and son-in-law: "So is this the end of our strangest adventure?"

"I don't know, Popeye," Terry answered. "But I don't see how it could be. Because we don't know just what happened, or will happen, to our star performers. The adventure will go on, incomplete, until we find out. Or until somebody else finds out. And if nobody does, it'll go on forever."

The newscast people were out at dawn, and the news was given to the world. I guess most people remember. Right then some big commercial enterprises were exploring the cold moons of Jupiter, and beginning the hard-headed job of exploiting the mineral deposits there; but folks forgot all that for a little while. For their whimsical interests were drawn to a half-legend that had vanished again into the unknown, or had slipped into a new phase, leaving behind the memory of its reality. A million things were said by millions of people, and though the words

might be different, the message was usually about the same. Here, a realistic, sometimes cruel populace, charmed by something little and different, paused to be kind:

"Good luck, Marty and Martia, wherever you've gone. And may we meet again. . . ."

Oh, there was some fear, too—perhaps not entirely unreasonable. One newspaper headline went something like this: "SUPER FISH FROM MARS INVADE OCEANS. WITH INTELLIGENCE OF HUMAN LEVEL, WILL THEY MULTIPLY, MAKE PLANS? WHAT UNKNOWN DANGERS LIE AHEAD?"

These were thoughts which subsided as months passed, and the Atlantic remained unchanged, and the story of a brief visitation dimmed somewhat in most minds—Terry's and Alice's and mine not included.

Terry Miklas had early offers to go on making music for the public. He turned them all down.

"What they remember of me, Popeye," he said later, "is that I was one of those who introduced Marty and Martia. People want to hear and see me for that reason—which doesn't make my music worth listening to, in its own right—at least not yet. Besides, I've got to keep watch along the shore, here. Because

you-know-who may want to come back. . . ."

When I thought about it, Terry's purpose applied as well to Alice and me. Because Marty and Martia had been just about the biggest event in our lives.

We had expected to have a lot of money. When our debts were paid we were quite a ways from being broke, but we were down to an economy level. We kept the house we had rented there on the Maine coast. Now our watch began. Fishermen were keeping their eyes open, too, thinking that their nets might bring up one or both of the runaways, or maybe some of their progeny. But nothing like that ever happened, as far as we know. Though of course here was something to add to the numerous and ancient legends of the sea.

During those autumn days and evenings, Terry would walk alone along the rocky shore, or with Alice, or with both Alice and me; and he'd play on his harmonica—capturing some of the mood of the eerie music that we had all heard. He got better at it, as time went on; but improvement wasn't his first motive.

"Maybe my tooting will draw those darn fools back!" he'd growl.

The vigil went on into the

winter, when the Atlantic was often really something to watch—huge white breakers swirling and thundering in, and roaring like devils. I suppose that Terry Miklas' patrolling of the shore, blowing weird tunes on his mouth organ, in weather like that, will make another yarn of the sea—a folktale of peculiar devotion—that will last for centuries along that coast.

But there were occasions, too, of quiet and fog, like that one evening in January. In this mild weather, all three of us were out there along the shore again. Far out, we heard the bell of a buoy clanking sleepily. And Terry tooted on his mouth organ again—little dreamy, coaxing bursts and trills, that no human besides himself could have produced.

Suddenly he stopped, and cocked his head to one side eagerly, listening. Alice and I did the same.

"Hear that?" Terry whispered at last, tensely.

"Yes, Terry—yes!" Alice answered.

"I think so," I put in. "Wait! Shhh!"

Just for a second the slurring, questioning notes were there, dim but unmistakable—coming from among the nearby rocks.

But when we had scrambled to the water's edge, there just

wasn't any more music, though Terry Miklas blew and blew on his harmonica. The sounds, as of a miniature xylophone, had faded for good. Our flashlights, boring through the fog, revealed only many seashells among the rocks.

"A shell," Alice mused.

"They're alive, anyway—at least one of them is—the perverse ingrates!" Terry growled, but his face looked pleased. "They could have returned to us, but they didn't . . . Well, we all love freedom, so I suppose that any inspirational thing of legend has to be free."

Again I felt chilly, yet pleasantly haunted. How many charming myths have been pursued, during the course of history? The Grail of the Knights. The Fairy Morgana. The Fountain of Youth. And now something else that we remembered as real.

Our watch continued there beside the Atlantic, which often is magnificent enough to thrill even a professional spaceman. Winter ended and Spring began; still there were no new signs of those we sought.

But in mid-May events took some fresh turns. The first of these was sour. While we wandered along the shore, we saw a hulking figure scanning the rocks, some hundreds of yards

farther along the water's edge.

I nodded toward the man and remarked, "So we've got company, once more. Brunder has been drawn back here, too."

He waved at us mockingly, and then moved off at his leisure in the opposite direction.

The next incident was much more of a romantic order. Terry and I were on that rough beach again, early one morning. We must have known every pebble and shell for miles each way, by now. But suddenly there was a glint at our feet; in the sunrise it shone yellow and metallic. I was sure that it hadn't been there the evening before.

Terry picked it up, and held it in his hand. It was a tiny golden brooch with antique griffons on it, eroded by the sea. There was no doubt that the thing was centuries old.

Terry looked speculative, and something greedy and ancient ached in my nerves. "Once there were pirates," Terry said. "Is that the answer for this—or part of it?"

Neither of us craved Brunder's company, just then. But suddenly there he was, smirking at us.

"I've got as much right to be here as anybody, Durbin," he pointed out to me. "You found

something, you two, didn't you?"

"What's it to you if we did, Brunder?" I snapped at him.

"Nothin'," he replied with forced mildness and a shrug. "Except that so did I find something."

He opened his paw, and a compelling curiosity made me look inside it. He had a tiny lump of yellow metal, which showed signs of having been stamped with a numeral or something once, though this was too worn to decipher, now.

"It's heavy, Durbin," Brunder said. "I went down there by those rocks, and there it was."

Terry and I were stuck with a swapping of courtesies, so to speak. So Terry opened his palm, too.

Brunder looked. Then he looked at me. "Gold ain't worth what it used to be in the old days, Durbin," he said. "There are too many sources of it now, in space. But it's still worth quite a bit. And there are other more valuable things on the sea floor. I wonder if you are thinking of the same thing that I am, Durbin? That if a man had a small friend with special skills . . . Well, skip it, Durbin. See you around . . . Come on, Toby . . ."

Yes—there on a rock was that big tomcat of Brunder's,

glaring expectantly at the water, his tail lashing. Brunder had to call again to make him come away.

Now, and for weeks to come, Terry and Alice and I practically lived on the beach, for we had seen what might be a further sign. Terry blew on his mouth organ intermittently, hour after hour. Alice threw bits of bread on the ocean—it was something that Marty and Martia had liked. But the crying seagulls grabbed most of it. And the pair from Mars who had left us made no attempt to see their old friends.

But every morning, when we pulled ourselves out of our sleeping bags on the shore—every morning for ten days—we always found something that hadn't been on the beach the night previous. Always the objects were in the same little, less rocky stretch of shore, fifty yards long—as if to make them easier to find.

Twice we found two medium-sized pearls. Once it was the link of a golden chain, and a cut ruby. Several mornings yielded a pair of golden coins, too worn to identify. Delivery was usually in pairs. It got so that, whenever we didn't find two of something, we figured that Brunder must have found its

other, companion piece.

One dawn, we thought we heard the xylophone. Later, in the sunshine, we were sure we glimpsed a flash of green and gold, thirty yards out from the rocks.

"Something really ought to happen soon," Alice said that day. "I wouldn't be surprised if they were back with us by tomorrow. And have you two decided yet whence came all the things of treasure—and how?"

She was kidding. The answer was more or less obvious, wasn't it? I thought of two small beings from Mars, lugging gifts up from the undersea in their flippers.

"Marty and Martia were with us long enough to begin to understand humans," I chuckled. "Maybe they feel obligated to us. Or maybe these presents are peace offerings for their running away. Or perhaps tribute is being paid to Earthly music and friends."

To myself I thought of the ocean—little known to me beyond looking at its surface, except from pictures: The sunlight turning violet deep down, and then fading to blackness more awesome than that of space. Submerged mountains and unexplored valleys. Hidden wealth. The skeletons of ships. Beautiful gardens of anemones.

Weird, fantastic world. The monsters of the deeps. Could Marty and Martia go even there—letting the fluids of their flesh become gradually compressed, until it thus assumed an internal counterpressure to hold back the terrible weight of the ocean above, and keep them from being crushed? Perhaps they could. For it was said that even warm-blooded whales, accustomed to the surface, could dive hundreds of fathoms deep. And, to defend themselves against enemies, our Martian pair and their probable offspring had their stings and their intelligence.

Alice's optimism about a possible reunion the next day, proved less than groundless. For, for the first time in many mornings, we found nothing of value on the shore. Week followed week, and it was the same. There were no more gifts, and no more indications of any kind that the creatures Terry and I had found on the Red Planet were still somewhere off the coast.

July passed, and half of August. In spite of the gifts from the sea—of limited value—our funds were getting low. I felt that we had about reached the end of a phase, for good. And we used to think that we'd get rich! Oh, sure! I was aware of

a lot of time wasted, instead. Yet I felt sad in another way, too.

Terry and Alice also looked sad. But now they received some offers to play for people, again. Terry did have a lot of talent: Marty and Martia had given him something completely new, and he had developed it, adding elements of his own.

As for me, I'm an active sort. I couldn't just hang around forever. For one thing, space was beckoning me back to it. So I said, "Well, kids—when do we break this up?"

"Soon, I guess, Dad," Alice answered. "It has been a whole year. But we'll always have to check back here now and then."

"Yeah, honey," I agreed.

Perhaps it was queer, but Brunder was still around. But Marty and Martia had been the big thing in his life, too; so he was just as persistent as we were. Maybe he thought that something might still break, and give him what is supposed to be at the end of the rainbow. He was living up in the village, somewhere. I kept glimpsing him, with that cat of his, along the shore. And quite often I saw Toby roaming by himself. He knew Terry and me, and he'd come to the house, and Alice would give him a handout.

So Toby became the key to a

vital point. You know the affinity that cats and dogs have for smelly objects. I saw Toby one morning at the back of our garden by the brook. He had something in his mouth. It consisted of two long ropy ends, connected by a slender cord. Yeah—nameless refuse, you'd say it was.

But something about it—I didn't know what—aroused my interest. So I approached Toby, and he growled a warning.

"Steady, Tomcat," I said. "Do you expect to chew through whatever that is? It looks pretty tough."

He growled again, and made his fur, marked like a tiger's, bristle. But now I got a better look at what he had. The two clublike ends of the object seemed to be composed of a mixture of clay and fibre, cemented together. It could be brook-clay, and the cellulose from aquatic plants.

After that, my blood began to pound, and I was in no mood to let Toby argue with me. "Thanks, Tomcat," I said. "Remind me to give you a whole steak sometime. But—come on, now—I want *that!*"

I got a clawed hand out of the deal; Toby got a swat on his ear, for which I should apologize.

I felt of the two tapered objects—joined together like two old friends who didn't want to lose each other. Then I hol-lered:

"Terry! Alice! Come here quick! . . ."

We put what Toby had found into a plastic tank that had been empty for a year. We poured water shallowly over it. Then we waited and drank pots of coffee, and paced up and down and speculated.

"They must have swum up the brook from the ocean," Terry said. "After that, scrambling overland among so much unfamiliar vegetation, maybe they got lost trying to find our house. It's been hot and dry most of this summer—*really* hot for anything Martian. Besides, Marty and Martia are mainly aquatic. They can't live out of water forever, and even the brook is almost dry this far from the sea. But they had a Martian way to keep alive—no, there are certain fish in African rivers that encase themselves in mud during the season when there is almost no water . . . Anyway—dammit—I hope that now everything is as fine as it seems! . . ."

Just about everything *was* fine. By noon that day, Marty and Martia were out of their cocoons, swimming in their

tank and trilling out our names and words that they hadn't forgotten, apparently delighted to be in our company again, after a year of complete freedom in an ocean of a strange, alien planet:

"Hhello-o-o-o, Tttrreee!  
Aaalllizzz! Ppoppaiee-ee! . . .  
Thhhannkzzz! Wweee cumm  
baaaackkkk! . . ."

Yes—the legend had returned. I got on the phone. Minutes later the world knew about it. I guess most everyone remembers how it was. Within an hour we were swamped with newscast people, and sponsors, and representatives from every phase of the entertainment industry. Also, there were serious scientists. It looked like the bonanza once more—but bigger than ever.

But Terry didn't want to sign any contracts. I thought that he must have gained in practical worldly knowledge, and was playing hard to get—a smart thing to do, with what we had.

"Give us a couple of weeks time, to see about several matters," was what he said to the commercial and television and theatrical people.

Alice and he proceeded to teach Marty and Martia a larger vocabulary. "They're folks, as far as we are concerned," he reminded me. "They have the intelligence and feelings of folks.

And this time they must understand us and speak well enough to tell us what they want—as is their right."

While admitting some suspicions of more frustrations on the way, I found myself agreeing with all this. It couldn't be otherwise.

So at last Terry put it to them. "What'll it be, Friends?" he asked. "Do you want to go traveling and making music with us, again? Or are you homesick for the northern ice-cap of Mars, under the dark blue sky? I know that you must be as restless as your music. Or is it something else that you want? There are many possible places and situations. There is even the zoo, or the museum—though I don't think I'd recommend either . . ."

No—Marty and Martia didn't answer right away. First they touched fins there in their tank. Then they swam around each other in a kind of dance. Finally Marty put his flippers against the plastic of the tank, and words buzzed out:

"Nnottt nnowww Mmarrzzz  
orrr ttrraavvllll . . . Bbbetttrrr  
nneww thhinngzzz . . . Ttry  
zzzooo . . . Ttry mmuuzzee-  
ummm . . ."

"Zoo? Museum?" Terry protested. "But that'll be like prison, Marty!"



"Zzoo—Mmuuzzeeum!" Marty persisted, and Martia echoed his words.

"You don't know what you're talking about!"

I'm afraid Terry Miklas was prejudiced. He didn't want to lose Marty and Martia as his tour-partners. I don't think it was the money so much—not with him. Rather, it was like having close friends who choose a separate path, and so are partly lost.

Now Alice put in her two cents worth. "Maybe they don't know what they're talking about, Terry," she said. "Who does, when they try something new—especially so new as the ways of another planet? Marty and Martia have to find out things for themselves. So, from their viewpoint, you could be wrong."

Well, Terry Miklas had a nice mild grin, in defeat. He shrugged. "All right, Music from Polar Mars," he said. "My very best wishes, and we'll still see each other around."

Then he looked at me, and the look said something which I'd already sensed. We used to talk about selling the *Pisces Martis* to zoos or museums or big scientific organizations for a heavy price. It was still possible, as far as such institutions and so forth were concerned. Funds were no

doubt available. And I don't think that Marty and Martia would have minded being exchanged for money in the least, nor would have felt in the least enslaved, thereby. For it is known, now, that money to them is just a quaint human custom, not influencing their liberty an iota. But still we had our own ethics to follow—rigid and necessary for us. We did not sell a humanly intelligent friend as a chattel. To do so was now unthinkable. Wherever Marty and Martia went, they went by their own choice, as responsible individuals. So again, for us, the Bonanza had to slip away.

Everybody knows how it has been. Marty and Martia are in New York, now—in the Museum of Natural History. But they've been flown around to many cities. They have a big tank, now, full of Martian and Earthly aquatic plants, and a hundred gadgets for Marty to fool with and examine, and for them both to tinkle out their haunting tunes, on. Their ancestors couldn't have lived more luxuriously, even in the days of Mars' ancient glory. Scientists from everywhere keep studying them, and asking them questions. They even have books printed on waterproof parchment. It seems that their special attendant, Professor Harwind, is teaching

them to read. And so, for the time being at least, their care-free, primitive existence, colored only by music, has been tainted by civilized industriousness.

Children love them, of course, and love the eerie trills and soaring, elfin chords, as of a tiny xylophone, that often speaks with words, too. But even tough spacemen, fresh from the mines of Callisto or Ganymede, come to watch and listen and wonder. And everyone else has seen and heard—if only by television and recording. Yes, there is something gentle and fascinating about the legendary mood that is Marty and Martia—even when it is pinned down, to be easily examined.

Alice and Terry? They struck out on their own, and are already a famous musical couple in their own right—making something new and fresh and truly their own, out of the art they borrowed. Perhaps it is final satisfaction and the end of restlessness for Terry Miklas. But sometimes they go back to see Marty and Martia, and put on a joint show with them, for the kids who come to the museum.

But I remember one time—not so very long ago, it was—when I dropped in to the mu-

seum to see Marty and Martia, as I still do quite often.

They understood and spoke human language a lot better by then, being quick to learn. So I said: "Suckers. Sloths. Cooped up here. Independence sold for comfort. Shame! A legend must be free . . ."

"Ssommtimme wwee ggo-o," Marty buzzed on the glass of the tank in answer. "Whennn neww thhinnggzz callll . . . Wwe arrr alllwwayzz ffrreeee . . ."

I guess Marty is right. When they want out, they'll say so. Popular opinion is on their side. And if this weren't so, they still have the cleverness to escape. To be a little like animals on display doesn't hurt their pride at all. By the way people like them and react to them, they are like prisoners who can walk through walls—if they are prisoners at all. Besides, they have plenty of time. Scientists, questioning them, have found that their life span is something more than three hundred Earth-years. So sometime they'll wander away again.

Marty said something more to me, that time: "Ssuckerr! Mmenn expllorr ddisstanttt pplannettzzz . . . Fforgggett ddeeeppp oshhunn. Sstrannnge."

I took the hint. In fact the idea had been revolving in my mind for some time. First I

bought some recordings of Marty's and Martia's music, right there in the museum store. Guess who I found there? Yeah—Brunner. Oh, yes—he'd been around at the house up in Maine, after Marty and Martia got back. "Hi, Durbin," he said without rancor.

I felt lonesome. Besides, there was something in the air—like the lion lying down with the lamb, maybe. Or would you say, instead, that we were just a couple of old goats?

"I got an idea, Brunner," I said. "Maybe sometime I'll get rich after all."

"Possibly I got the same idea, Durbin," Brunner intimated. "I also bought some used deep-sea diving equipment, cheap. Now if you could scrape enough money together to buy or rent an old launch, some place . . ."

Well, in a matter of a week or so, Brunner and I were off the Maine coast together. We were a couple of grouchy old spacemen, trying a new racket that intrigued us. Toby, the tomcat, was dozing in the engine-room. We had an under-water sound-system, through which we were playing some elfin music, which originated on another planet.

I went down a rope in a deep-sea diving suit, which is a little like a space suit, but is two

hundred times as heavy. When I had been down there about an hour, I met a little green and gold critter who liked what our sound-system was playing, looked like some old friends of ours, though he wasn't full-grown, yet, and clearly wanted to be friendly.

Oh, we had to converse with him on a number of occasions, give him the legendary name of Neptune, and teach him some English words. But pretty soon he got the idea of what we wanted, and led us right to the broken strong-box of an old, sunken sailing ship. Then he found us another vessel. The take in antique jewelry and money wasn't very great, but it kept us going.

We kept working at the salvage business, with Neptune as our locator. We even conversed with him about another legend—the one about Lost Atlantis—but he doesn't have any information.

Finally, however, we had a heavy bathyspheric submarine built, atom-powered, for real deep-sea diving. Yeah—funny how when space travel began, people forgot about the strange rich world of the deep ocean. Because down there, with Neptune's assistance, we have tapped about the richest deposit of uranium ore that has ever been found any place . . .